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Christianity and Society

The Christian Church in the World Crisis

H. R. Niebuhr

Atlantis

W. H. Auden

The Life of the Spirit in the World of the Will to Power

Donald Stewart

Christianity versus Idealism

Holmes Hartshorne

Summer 1941

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CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

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CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

Volume 6 Number 3

EDITORIALS

America in the Hour of Decision

During the past months, while the world has been writhing in the agony of a terrible war, the American people have been in the throes of a spiritual crisis. The defeat of Yugoslavia and Greece, the reverses of the British in Libya, the impending closer collaboration between the Germans and the Russians on the one hand, and between the Germans and the pathetic remnant of France, governed from Vichy, on the other hand have made it apparent that an Axis victory cannot be averted without a greater degree of involvement on the part of America than was contemplated in the lease-and bill.

The international situation thus made an unambiguous decision about our own position in the struggle more and more urgent. But we were not ready for a decision and are not now ready for it, though it may have been forced upon us by the pressure of events before these lines reach the reader. The American nation is divided. When the Germans entered Prague in March of 1939 the division of the British nation was abruptly overcome. From that moment every Britisher, with the exception of a few fascists and communists, knew that Britain would either have to resist or connive in a Nazi dominated world. We are now in a somewhat similar position, but we are not as directly in the line of march of the aggressor and the facts of the situation are not as obvious or as vivid to us as they finally became to the European nations.

The fact that America is immediately far and ultimately near to Europe, and for that matter to any part of the world, lies at the basis of our spiritual and political confusion. It is responsible for the reaction of isolationism, reaching the proportions of a psychosis, which followed our participation in the last world war. Just as Britain tried to convince herself that she did not belong to the continent, and aggravated the anarchy of the continent by her hope that she could avoid being drawn into it, so we have tried to persuade ourselves that the world might sink into either tyranny or anarchy without affecting us. Our illusions were slightly more plausible than those of Britain before 1939, but the tragic events of the present moment have proved them to be only slightly more so.

One rather pathetic aspect of the debate on foreign policy in our nation is that the same people who seek to discredit Britain, because she did not act until her interests were obviously imperiled, insist that we must make precisely the same mistake in our turn. Furthermore the same people who discredit all heroic efforts to preserve a democratic

civilization because they have discovered that no nation defends values which transcend its national existence until its instincts of survival are engaged, seal their idealistic abhorrence of the ambiguities of political life by joining the "America First" committee. This combination of idealism and cynicism, this alliance between pacifist clergymen and the "Realpolitiker" of the America First movement is a nice indication of the confusion to which the simple moralism of our whole liberal movement has lead us.

Despite these confusions it is well for interventionists to bear in mind that there are geographic-political facts which do not justify simple, moral judgments. There are, in fact, residual elements in political life which are never quite moral or immoral. They belong to the givenness of things. Even the most sensitive spirits are not quite as concerned over suffering far away as suffering near at hand. We cannot be complacent about our own geographically conditioned complacency; yet we cannot be too censorious of that complacency in others. The confusions which arise from the immediate distance and the ultimate nearness of America to Europe are political facts which achieve the character of an inelectable fate. If we get into the war, it will be well for us to remember this. For we cannot go into the war as a united nation, though presumably some of the present opposition will be dissipated under the pressure of circumstances. There will be a large minority which will regard this war as totally useless and unnecessary. They will rationalize their position in many ways: but many of these rationalizations would have no plausibility at all if certain geographic facts did not give them a basis.

While it is necessary and important to remember these facts, so that the fury of party conflict will be mitigated, it is also necessary to resist the fury of that type of Christian thought, which has compounded bourgeois prudence with Christian perfectionism in an unholy compound and seeks to give American isolationism a spiritual foundation. It is one thing to abstain from all political conflict in the name of perfect love. It is another thing to condone selfish nationalism, of the type embodied in "America First," in the fond illusion that it is more "Christian" than the element of imperialism, which corrupts the politics of interventionism. This confusion, perfectly embodied in the collaboration of the "Ministers No More War Committee" with the "America First" movement is really something more than a momentary or incidental aberration. It is the perfect fruit of a Christian liberalism which has never taken the moral perfectionism of the Sermon on the Mount seriously, but imagined that it represented counsels of prudence and canons of success. It thought that the precepts of Jesus could be fulfilled if a congregation of coupon-clippers in a fashionable suburb were told not to condone a strike because a strike means conflict and conflict is incompatible with the "perfect love" of Jesus. It thought that the injunction of Jesus, "Be not anxious for tomorrow," could best be heeded by arranging for an "Insurance Sunday" in which the congregation would be admonished to take out adequate insurance for the family so that there need be no anxiety for the future.

To be sure, the combinations of gospel absolutes and bourgeois relativities were not always as crude as this. But they represent the general temper of American religious liberalism. Its inability to

ee that "America First" politics is a ravesty of gospel perfectionism is organ-cally related to all the confusions and llusions which have informed the his-ory of this fatuous liberalism.

We do not know what the future has n store for us or for western civilization. This civilization may capitulate to tyr-nny, or it may be unable to lift itself rom anarchy to a new level of interna-ional justice. But one thing is certain. f any new international order is to be chieved, the tragic events of the pres-nt must reform the very mind of the iberalism which has informed our cul-ure. We must find a way of dealing vith political realities which makes jus-ice something more than the prostitute f power on the one hand, and something nore than sentimental day dreams on he other. We must find an understand-ng of life which is deep enough to save s from vacillating between sentimental-y and cynicism or from compounding he two when we are tired of one or he other.

There is in the profundity of the Chris-an faith, a resource which makes it pos-ible to recognize the most tragic and emonic realities of human history with-ut sinking into despair, and to deal with he tremendous possibilities of human xistence without being tempted to ride. But we have diluted that faith to uch a degree that it has been a source of lindness to us more frequently than a ource of light.

White Man's Burden

Henry R. Luce's editorial in *Life,* The American Century," continues to e a center of controversy. Its impor-nce is indicated in that it was reprinted n pamphlet form and distributed free of harge, especially in the colleges. It has now been published in book form, together with comments by Dorothy Thompson, Quincy Howe, John Chamberlain, Robert G. Spivack, and Robert E. Sherwood. When it was first published in *Life,* Freda Kirchwey wrote a biting editorial in *The Nation,* entitled "Luce Thinking." More recently Max Lerner pointed out in *The New Republic,* that Mr. Luce's credo had to be taken seriously by all internationalists in America whether or not they agree with the details of his plan. The point, Lerner insisted, is that, for good or for evil, America has to undertake more responsibility for the world, and this will involve a kind of imperialism. That this is true, is borne out by Eliot Janeway's article in the May 5th number of *Life,* "Roosevelt vs. Hitler: The U. S. Wages World Diplomatic War." Janeway declares that we have already begun to export the New Deal—especially to China —and that there is good reason to believe that we can out "Fifth Column" Hitler. He says that the war, to say nothing of the peace, cannot be won by force of arms alone, that it must be won by ideas. And the strongest are the American ideas of the four freedoms which President Roosevelt has insisted upon as the basis of a just order—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from starvation, and freedom from fear.

Mr. Luce, too, speaks of the four freedoms as America's gift to the world. That is good. But Mr. Luce also speaks of freedom of economic enterprise. What he means is not quite clear; but here is full warning to all democratic internationalists that we have a battle on two fronts: at home as well as abroad. We must beware of those who would use the international situation to escape necessary reform at home. It is evident that Mr. Luce envisages, or at least hopes for,

a revitalizing of the capitalist economy. Besides the emphasis on free economic enterprise, he tells us how many billions of dollars Asia should mean to us in the future. It must be added in fairness that Mr. Luce advocates giving away up to ten per cent of our food if that is necessary to keep a starving world alive (supposedly the farmers would be fairly recompensed). And it must be added in warning that Mr. Luce's main emphasis is on spiritual and moral imperialism.

Even if this did not prove to be a façade for economic imperialism, it would be dangerous, and the chief danger is not that Uncle Sam will be played for Uncle Sap, as John Chamberlain fears. The chief danger is what such a spiritual imperialism—and it will inevitably be political also—would do not only to the rest of the world but also what it would do to America. Even if we are able to win the battle on the home front so as to eliminate capitalist or any kind of economic imperialism, this danger remains.

Here is the irony of our situation. We are already committed to some form of internationalism which will involve us in this variety of imperialism. We cannot withdraw now because to do so would be fatal. Furthermore, it is unlikely that we can completely eliminate the element of economic imperialism, and still we are obliged to move in this direction. This is ironical. It seems that Fate is standing there in the shadow with a sardonic smile, saying, "Remember how you used to scoff at the White Man's Burden? Now look at you! Kipling reincarnated in Luce and you have to work along with him! Ha!" And it is true. This is not to argue that we must ride the Wave of the Future; but we do have to work with the only tools we have at hand. Fate is notoriously fickle and goes philandering just when we think her most faithful. But petulance and self-righteousness are hardly more admirable than faithlessness itself—and certainly are no better instruments for making the best of a bad situation.

So the problem we have been facing since the outbreak of the war becomes even more acute. That is the problem of making choices between relative goods and evils without capitulating and declaring them to be absolute goods or evils. Weaned as we were on liberal moralism, we are ill-prepared to cope with such a situation. But we must. And we must forge our weapons as we go. St. Paul said to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling." That is the only way we can possibly work it out—with fear and trembling. And this is no craven fear. It follows from the recognition that history is tragic—fatefully tragic—and man is sinful.

This means that while we may not be able to escape the fate which Mr. Luce describes as America's, we must sharply reject any tendency to accept this fate glibly and above all we must cry out against reveling in it. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!" Amos declared. "To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." And well it may be for us.

This, it seems to us, is the chief reason Mr. Luce is to be distrusted: he revels in this fate of the new white man's burden. He does not show the slightest indication that our salvation can be worked out only in fear and trembling. But Mr. Luce has his fear. It is the fear that the old order is crumbling. He sees a chance to halt that crumbling by making the eagle scream and by appealing to the destined leadership of America in this century. In times like ours when a man

ccepts fate with such eagerness you can e sure he is either naïve or insincere r else covering up a fear. And it is the ncovered fears that are the most dan- erous. Such fear never was nor ever can e the beginning of wisdom.

It would be a pleasure to leave Mr. uce to his own fears and to consign him o his own fate. But unfortunately his- ory doesn't work that way and his fears ill affect our fate. Whether we like it r not we are saddled with a new white an's burden and such fears as Mr. Luce as, will add to that burden. Indeed we ill be fortunate if the burden thus eighted, does not become a millstone ung around America's neck; but that the chance we must take unless we are o give up the game entirely.

trikes in Industry

Fortunately, the strike situation in in- ustry has not been as serious as it threat- ned to be at the beginning of April. The National Mediation Board has ccomplished more than we had a right o expect. The situation has frequently ppeared worse than it really was because abor has a "bad press" and every labor ispute gives reactionaries the pretext for ushing to the public with demands that ne right to strike be abolished in the nterest of national defense.

It is well to remember for the sake of erspective that the production schedule n strategic defense industries was de- yed for weeks last fall while big indus- ialists bargained with the government or the best possible amortization laws or their new defense expansion. The aims were not all illegitimate, but the irtual sit-down of big industry at that me almost assumed the proportions of xtortion.

Most of the strikes in industry have hardly been in the same category, though it must be admitted that all strikes in times of national emergency are danger- ous. Some of the strikes had the very legitimate purpose of forcing the com- pany to call an election in the plant. In the case of Ford, one such strike was needed to force an election, and another strike may be required to compel the company to sign a contract with the suc- cessful union in the election. It is remarkable how many of the recent strikes were for the purpose of consolidat- ing rights long since granted by federal law. They prove incidentally that politi- cal power alone does not suffice to give the laborer his rights. He must use a combination of political and economic power to achieve a tolerable balance of power against the power of the owners.

There have been on the other hand, and will be, jurisdictional strikes be- tween CIO and AF of L which represent the civil war in labor. These strikes achieve no genuine advance in social jus- tice and ought not to have the sympathy of the nation. As for the strikes which may be inspired by communists in the hope of laming the national defense effort, they can be discredited the more effectively if the irresponsible charge of "communism" is not made against every strike effort.

Strikes are of course a modified form of domestic warfare and are certainly not good in themselves. Ideally a democratic community would preserve the right to strike but the need to strike would not exist. It is apparent, however, that the right to strike represents a power in the hand of labor without which democratic justice cannot be maintained. If a na- tional emergency makes it necessary to limit the right to strike in some way, it is obvious that labor must have full representation on the agencies which are

entrusted with the adjustment of labor disputes, which are ordinarily settled by strike methods.

The Church Speaks on Labor

Speaking at the convention of the New York Diocese of the Episcopal Church, the Reverend Floyd Van Keuren, social service director of the diocese, declared: "Social welfare and Christian morality demand that we fight the good fight before it is too late and declare war on the Axis." After this declaration the social service secretary declared that, "he would be remiss in his duty as social service secretary," if he did not call attention to a "monstrous social evil which calls for fearless and militant action." This monstrous evil, it turns out, is the fact that there have been strikes in defense industries: "I believe in labor unions and in the right of collective bargaining," declared Mr. Van Keuren generously, "but the strikes now going on are not for better labor conditions, nor for justice in human relations. They are the European Axis in action, treasonably trying to sabotage our defense work."

These irresponsible words from a "social service secretary" of a church reach a new low level of political and moral obscurantism. However important it may be to resist the Nazis, the church ought to be the last organization in a nation to combine a plea for war with an hysterical demand for the suppression of the ordinary processes of democratic justice at home.

Union for Democratic Action

Under the chairmanship of the editor of this journal, a Union for Democratic Action has been formed to unite all those on the center and left in American life who believe that democratic civilization must defend itself against external peril, but must not allow this task of defense to beguile it from maintaining and extending social gains in the domestic economy. The organization believes in the "fight on two fronts." It will resist isolationism in the ranks of labor and reaction in the ranks of interventionists.

It does not believe that the domestic and the foreign tasks of democratic civilization are in opposition to each other but that the one can be integrated into the other. It will resist the effort of conservatives to restrict the rights of labor in the name of national defense. It will work for taxation programs which will achieve "equality of sacrifice" by "inequality of sacrifice," on the ground that a society which begins with great inequalities of privilege, must insist on inequalities of specific sacrifices if the genuine equality of sacrifice is to be achieved. There is, incidentally, good scriptural authority for this program. It is to be found in Jesus' observations on the widow's mite.

The organization will set up research committees on various aspects of the democratic struggle, including one on peace aims. The Union believes that all forces in democratic society which look toward a new world order must be organized now for the purpose of defining their objectives. It believes at the same time that it would be a luxury to speculate upon an ideal reorganization of society, if the immediate task of overcoming Nazi tyranny is not accomplished.

Readers of our journal who are interested in the Union for Democratic Action may receive further information by writing to us.

The Story of a False Religion

When the sad history of this epoch is

written, no element will appear more bizarre and pathetic than the rise and the fall of the political religion of communism. Only a few short years ago it was the faith which informed the lives of thousands of intellectuals on the left; and there were not a few radicals in the church who compounded it with their Christian faith in a compound in which the Marxist apocalypse was the dominant element. There were many who regarded Marxism as a kind of receiver in bankruptcy for a bankrupt Christianity.

Then came a whole series of shocking disillusionments. The trials and purges in Russia confronted the faithful with the horrible alternative of accepting as genuine the confessions of leaders of the movement who declared themselves to have been traitors from the beginning; or of recognizing in Stalin a ruthless dictator who punished treason against his rule not only with the forfeiture of life but with the spiritual assassination of coerced self-abasement. The fact that either alternative was equally deadly to the faith, drove many of the believers into skepticism and heresy. Louis Fischer began to doubt; and Sidney Hook and Max Eastman not only doubted but declared the once true church to be anti-Christ.

Yet the faith of many was so strong that it survived this shock until the Nazi-Soviet pact was signed. This pact was, in some respects, an even more disastrous denouement. Other faiths have been corrupted by fanaticism and the cruelty of inquisitions. But this pact meant that the true church had come to an agreement with a force which only yesterday had been cast in the role of the devil. This was too much for Vincent Sheean, Ralph Bates, and a host of other faithful and fellow travelers. The exodus from the church among both the intellectuals and labor assumed the proportions of a mass defection.

The only hope of reconstructing the plausibility of a faith, which seemed to become daily more implausible, was to return to a more ancient and authoritative scriptural interpretation, according to which it was not fascism, but capitalistic imperialism in general, which was the devil of history. The version, which had given fascism the eminence of the devil or of anti-Christ was, after all, a recent gloss, not contemplated in the original text. In that text, fascism had not been anticipated at all. It is by this revision of a revision that the faithful now live, pitifully pouring over the ancient text and seeking to interpret contemporary events and future hopes in the light of it.

There are, to be sure, slight differences even now in the interpretations of this original text. According to one interpretation, the present war is a conflict of rival imperialisms, which will result in their mutual destruction and thus will lead to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. According to another interpretation, Russia, with its "invincible and undefeated Red army," is biding its time to strike at the Nazis, and would be ready to cooperate with Britain and America in accomplishing this task as soon as these nations purge themselves of their sins and prove the genuineness of their repentance by electing "People's governments." It need hardly be said that the realities of the situation are in cruel contradiction with this second version. For Russia is shivering in her boots with fear that the formidable Nazi military machine will cut through the Ukraine, like a knife through butter, whenever it suits the purposes of Hitler. These fears, combined with the hopes of sharing in the Nazi plunder in Persia and

the Near East, have brought the communists into closer and closer collaboration with the Nazis, so that before these lines are read they may well have a position in the total Nazi enterprise quite analogous to that of Italy.

The Kremlin has never spoken to clarify the thoughts of the faithful in regard to the divergent versions of its policy. No doubt there must be remnants of the original communist faith even in the Kremlin, which prompt it to hope that the capitalist nations will destroy each other and allow communism to gain a world-wide victory. But these hopes cannot be published, lest they offend the masterful ally. The second version, that Russia is waiting upon the repentance of the democratic nations, is a little more official, since the Kremlin uses it to encourage "People's conventions." Meanwhile the actual driving force of Soviet policy is fear of attack and the hope of participating in the German "Drang nach Osten."

The facts are apparent enough. The faith of millions in a movement which would emancipate the workers of the world has degenerated into a pitiful adjunct of Russian foreign policy. It has value only in so far as it still claims the allegiance of scattered remnants of intellectuals and workers, whose blind faith gives Russia a certain nuisance power in the domestic affairs of other nations, comparable to Germany's Nazi cells.

That men should be able to cling to this faith in defiance of all the evidence, and that there should be people even in the Christian church from the Dean of Canterbury down, who exhaust their ingenuity in making the worse appear the better reason, is merely a revelation of the depth of confusion in our democratic culture. It was a culture which tried to live by skepticism and without faith and found that impossible. It tried to construct faith in reason into a religion; but the tumults of the era proved that faith inadequate. It turned to Marxism, in which it found many valid clues for the interpretation of life and history, clues which are incidentally still valid.

The difficulty with the Marxist faith was that it was a too purely political religion, only slightly less political than Nazism itself. Politics deals with secondary evils and proximate goals of justice. These evils cannot be eliminated and these proximate goals cannot be realized in modern civilization without the application of some of the insights of Marxism. But when the proximate is confused with the ultimate, and a political program turns into a religion of salvation, it becomes a source of confusion.

The history of Christianity testifies to the fact that there are dregs in every cup of salvation, in so far as salvation is interpreted by human minds and mediated by human institutions. Political religions drain off the wine and leave only the dregs. The sight of many people still smacking their lips over these dregs and trying to persuade themselves that it is the true wine, belongs to the sorriest spectacles of contemporary life.

The Supreme Court and Jim Crowism

The Supreme Court decision against Jim Crowism will not abolish segregation in transportation. It requires only that negroes be given equal, and not necessarily the same, accommodations on trains and other conveyances. It does not of course affect any transportation within the boundaries of a single state. It will presumably force railroads to give negroes accommodations in Pullmans and dining cars in interstate journeys

ecause it would be too costly to run parate diners and sleeping cars for groes. It will probably not affect the toriously unsanitary conditions of the y coaches reserved for negroes because e transportation companies may always aim that these represent "equal" accommodations in terms of physical uipment.

The decision thus clearly reveals the nits of law in achieving justice in defice of the habits and prejudices of men. t it also reveals the majesty of the law. ch a decision means that general standds of equity may be affirmed and given estige by the nation as a whole, in position to certain sections of the comunity. This legal majesty behind a tain social standard has both political d moral efficacy. It has political effiy because those who violate the standd may be punished. It has moral ce because it holds up a certain standd of justice as normative in defiance those who live by lower norms.

A complete analysis of the meaning of h a decision must prompt us to both titude for the constitutional traditions democracy, and to a new determinan to realize in life and reality what law cannot of itself achieve.

It may be observed incidentally that decent justice known in western civiition is not necessarily derived from mocracy" in the narrow sense of that n. It is as frequently derived from onstitutionalism." This is to say that tice depends not merely upon the free y of various forces and vitalities in a iety and upon the liberty of every ial interest to make its claim. It also ends upon fixed general rules of uity which are not subject to change der pressure of momentary prejudice narrow and isolated interest. We have been too prone to make an absolute distinction between tyranny and democracy. Democracy is undoubtedly the best method of changing and perfecting the standards of a society. But any "rule of law" even if not democratic, is better than the caprice of tyranny.

If modern idealists understood a little better what infinite grades and shades of justice may be achieved within constitutional systems, even when they are not democratic, they would not be so prone to equate anything which is not fully democratic with Nazi tyranny.

Knowledge Is Not Enough

At a recent meeting of the educational directors of all the labor unions a prominent educator promised victory for the democratic cause if it combined "knowledge and organization." Perhaps the educator had forgotten that the many Marxists unions of the continent who have been overwhelmed by Nazi "dynamism" were wanting in neither knowledge or organizational cohesion. Something else was lacking. The Marxists movement had not interpreted the human situation in such a way as to minimize the moral and spiritual factors in human conduct. Nazi dynamism may be a demonic form of the appeal to the spiritual; but no one can deny that it is "spiritual" in contrast to the purely economic interpretations of human action in Marxism and classical liberalism and the purely intellectual interpretations of the reformist liberals.

The most basic organizational problem of American labor, the conflict between the A.F. of L and C.I.O. cannot be solved by more knowledge. It is to a certain degree a "class struggle" within labor, that is, a struggle between the more privileged and the less privileged

members of the working class. An appeal to economic interest alone does not solve this problem either. The fact is, that however powerful economic motivation may be, no movement can achieve unity by appeal to self-interest alone, and certainly not by interpreting self-interest in purely economic terms.

The democratic cause requires something more than the simple cynicism to which the Marxist economic interpretation of man easily degenerates and the purely intellectualistic moralism which reformist liberalism effects. Nazi dynamism has overwhelmed the democratic world because its perverted sense of community was, whatever its defects, more potent than the anarchy of private interests into which the democratic cause had degenerated.

It is not without significance that the one democratic nation which has been able to meet the Nazi terror with unbroken unity and with stubborn heroism, has been Britain. For the resources of a Christian civilization were less dissipated in Britain than in any other modern nation. Its spiritual unity certainly presents a striking contrast to the decadent disunity of France. Hitler is not wrong in boasting that he has destroyed the world of the French Revolution. In so far as our own American culture is full of the rationalistic illusions of eighteenth century France, we offer him some of the same opportunities which France offered.

This eighteenth-century world either disavows all values but self-interest, or it rises to a simple moralism which imagines that knowledge alone lifts man from self-interest to social interest. The goodness of man and the evil in man are more paradoxically related to each other than either the cynics or the sentimentalists realize.

A PRAYER

O God, draw near in smiting virtue's pride,
Defeating us when we refuse Thy law,
For nothing which is pride will not have died
When all Thou spake is done, as faith foresaw.

We need no small tight proof to worship Thee:
In hearts of penitents truth argues well.
We know that should Thy word not make us free,
Then we would die—men cannot lifeless dwell!

O Joy, Who made the world so beautiful
With faith, fill our imaginations high!
Admit us to Thy foolishness, and pull
Us from our wisdom's rueful destiny.

Save us against unconquerable will
Which is not Thine, and help us understand
The impotence of zeal used to fulfill
Brave hopes which lack the pledge of Thy command. Amen.

RONALD LANDOR.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WORLD'S CRISIS

By H. Richard Niebuhr

(An Address to the Fellowship of Socialist Christians)

My understanding of the duty of Christians and of the church in the world's crisis may be set forth in three general propositions:

(1) The religious issue in any particular time and place is less an issue about the specific content of actions than of the context in which each specific action is to be carried out.

(2) The important questions in the contemporary world crisis are religious questions, or questions about the context of political actions.

(3) The problem of Christians today is that of so organizing and shaping their political actions that they will express confidence in and loyalty to the Father of Jesus Christ and faith in the forgiveness of sins.

I

The first proposition is directed against two misconceptions of the Christian life. One of these is the thought that religious faith calls for specific sorts of domestic, economic, or political action, so that Christianity as such calls for the defense of democracy, or the adoption of socialism, or the policy of isolation, or conscientious objection to participation in war, or obedience to political authority, or marriage, or celibacy, or any one of a hundred similar specific actions. The other misconception is the opposite one; it states that since religious faith does not require specific political or other social actions, therefore it appears only in peculiarly religious actions, such as prayer and worship, in emotions of love and sorrow, and in verbal behavior, in exhortation and preaching "the gospel." These two misconceptions represent the fatal dilemma into which Christians often feel themselves to be forced when they are required to confess their Christianity either by choosing sides in some confused political struggle or by retiring from the political and social life, at least insofar as they are Christians. The latter horn of the dilemma is chosen by contemplatives, the former by activists; and some, very conscientious Christians, choose both horns by declaring a moratorium on their faith while they engage in the specific actions which their moral sense requires them to perform and to condemn.

The dilemma is a false one if actions are not considered as separate deeds, like beads strung together on a necklace, or like pebbles dropped one by one into the receptacle of the past. Actions are like words. Despite all efforts to discover the "real" meaning of a word by contemplating it long and thoughtfully, it reveals its meaning only in a sentence or paragraph in which the full intention of a speaker is made manifest. A single action apart from a total context may affect events, as an accident does, but not otherwise. It derives significance only from the context in which it stands; and the context which carries the action along, which makes it part of a total pattern, is determined by religion. Religion enters into every specific action but does not determine the rough ma-

terial of the action; and it can use very different materials to express the same contextual meaning.

A few illustrations may serve to illuminate this function of faith. A Pharisee and a publican both pray. Now prayer, considered in itself, is regarded by most religious people as a good action, but prayer in the context of the Pharisee's trust in his own goodness is a bad action, being preceded by and directed toward other actions of self-aggrandizement, while prayer in the context of the publican's faith is a work of mercy. It is wholly inadequate to require religious men to profess their faith in prayer. All men pray. The religious question is how and when and in what total context they pray or do not pray.

Another illustration may be taken from domestic life. The great alternative men have always faced in their sex life has been that of celibacy or union with a member of the other sex. But religious faith gives little answer to the question whether men ought to unite with a sex-partner or be celibate. It does affirm that whichever of these alternatives be chosen it be so chosen and so made part of a life of continuous responsibility that the act is not allowed to stand by itself but is made meaningful and effective in long devotion. What is forbidden by Christian faith is neither celibacy nor marriage, but all self-indulgence, adultery, fornication—all isolated, unformed, irresponsible acts.

Looking away from our own faith we note that every religion supplies such a context, and the meaning and effect of the actions of its devotees is determined by the context. National socialism, which despite nihilistic tendencies has certain religious qualities, enjoins love of neighbor, leads to practices of mutual support, makes provision for the poor, trains youth to sacrificial service, builds for the "common" good. But the meaning and effect of these acts—on which some look with great approbation—can be understood only if their whole context, their association with military ambition, with the persecution of Jews, etc., is taken into consideration.

These illustrations suggest two affirmations about religious interest in political action and two corollaries of the general principle. The affirmations are: (1) Religious interest is directed more toward preceding and succeeding acts than toward the particular act of the moment; (2) any particular act is molded by its context.

Christianity's interest in motive is explained in many ways. Sometimes we use it to excuse ourselves from making present decisions, as when we assert that we can do no good until we have become good and that therefore our social action must wait on our personal sanctification, or our international action must be postponed until we have gained national perfection. Taken as descriptive statements the remarks of Jesus on motivation seem to mean that a visible act which stands in succession to selfish or impure, invisible acts is evil, no matter how good it appears to be in isolation. The direction of the act, be it almsgiving or prayer, is determined by the direction of the actor rather than by its intrinsic nature. For the moral agent, insistence on purity of motive does not mean that he must stop external, visible action until all his internal actions are good, but that he must strive to make his present and external act correspond to the drive and direction of those internal actions which are good or in accordance with the will of God. He endeavors to put his prayer or almsgiving in line with his neighbor-

regarding or God-regarding motions of the heart rather than with his self-regarding internal actions. There is no other way of working on our motives.

Yet it is false to over-emphasize Christian interest in the antecedents of action. Christian conscience is at least equally interested in the successors of an act. For a mechanical conception of life, an act leads to determined consequences and nothing is to be done about it. For the personal conception of Judaism and Christianity, participation of the person does not end with the doing of an act. Its fundamental interest is not in any mechanical consequences of an act, beyond personal control, but in the acts which a self will perform in succession to the act of the moment. Christian ideas of recompense and responsibility, of forgiveness of sins and divine mercy, all emphasize this point. If the act performed has been sinful—as all acts are, expressing not one but many intentions—Christian faith requires the actor not to despair but to say, "By the grace of God something good may come out of this deed, if I stay with it as God stays with it, if I will trust and not despair, if I will accept my pain and remorse and the pain of the innocents I have injured." What is important is that the self follow the bad or the proud act with an act molded by penitence and faith, that it accept and work with the consequences, with the sin and pain in the self and the pain in the neighbor. It can do this insofar as it sees that God can follow the bad act with one of goodness, thinking to do good though men think to do evil. On the other hand it is important for faith that it understands how every apparently good act can lead to bad, proud successor acts which will make the effect of the whole movement evil rather than good.

Interest in the antecedents and successors of an action does not mean that faith is indifferent to the particular act. Some acts are excluded from life as being incapable, so far as man's, not God's, action is concerned, of being made significant. Some words in any language are so blasphemous that they have no place in any Christian sentence. But these are relatively few in number, while there are no words so good that they cannot be used in a wholly vulgar sentence. Apart from the question of the rare, excluded act, it is evident that an act placed in a particular context is molded and given distinctive form, even as a word in a sentence is subject—according to its position—to variations of case, tense, mood, inflection, accent. Both Pharisee and publican pray, but in the different contexts the two acts are done with a difference, apparent even in the physical form. Both Jesus and the political revolter die in martyrdom, but with a difference. The Christian conscientious objector's refusal to obey the state differs in form from the individualistic objector's; the Christian soldier does not fight as Genghis Khan does, and the Christian socialist's political campaign differs from the Stalinist's. All this does not mean that the molding of the single action is the main contribution of the context. The sentence remains more important than the word and no word justifies a speaker. Nevertheless, when two people do the same thing, it is not the same.

The two corollaries of the general proposition that the religious issue is an issue of context of actions may now be briefly stated: (1) Acts differing greatly in material content may achieve similar effects when they are placed in similar contexts; (2) acts of the same general content may achieve opposite effects in antithetical contexts. Thus a work of

relief to a victim of aggression and a work of restraint on the aggressor may express the same idea and lead to the same result if the contexts of the actions are similar, while two acts of relief may express opposite intentions if one is part of a self-preservative action and the other part of a total self-denying action.

II

Our second proposition was that the important issues of our time concern the contexts in which actions are to be done rather than particular actions. I mean by this not that the great conflict is one of ideologies but rather one of faiths which are incompletely and often dishonestly represented in the ideologies.

My first illustration of this point is not the strongest one, but I believe it relevant. May it not be said that the real issue of our time in matters of property does not lie in the act of social or private ownership but in the context of such ownership? From one point of view it appears that the question of social ownership is no longer really debatable. Whatever theories are held regarding property the whole drift is toward ownership of the means of production by social groups. And the great question is whether such ownership shall stand in the context of egoistic, or of nationalistic, or of what we now like to call democratic, but which I think we ought to call, universalistic socialism. Marxists operating with their stereotyped formulas see only two alternatives, private or social ownership; hence when they deal with the conflict between national socialism and their own class socialism they must interpret the former as a defense type of capitalism, based on the principle of private ownership—an interpretation that cannot hold water for a moment in view of the actual measures adopted by nationalism in socializing industry. Moreover they are unable to discern the ease with which their own kind of social ownership can become egoistic—as in bureaucratic control—or nationalistic. Again the conflict between both types of socialism and capitalism is evidently not always a conflict between social and private ownership but sometimes a struggle between nationalistic or class loyalty with universalism, that is with respect for the rights of men as members of a universal society. For in certain forms of what is vaguely called capitalism, private property does stand in the context of universalism rather than of egoism. Private ownership of the means of production by those who own property for use—as in the case of many handicrafts and to a large extent in agriculture—stands in the context of universalism more than some social ownership does. Only confusion results from exclusive attention to the mode of ownership. The question of our time is not how property is to be owned; the issue does not lie between the advocates of social and those of private ownership, but between the religions of egoism, nationalism, and universalism.

For egoism, private or public ownership will always stand in the context of private gain. What precedes it will be personal interest and what follows will be personal power. New ruling groups, more powerful than the managers of so-called private industry, will use and mold social ownership in their own egoistic context if they are not checked. For nationalism, property will be socialized or left in private hands according to the dominant interest. Universalist socialism will try to keep social ownership within the context of universal human rights and duties, and for the sake of the context allow some private property. What is not evident is that socialism, as social

ownership of property, will lead to a truer universalism than private ownership has done; it may be an instrument of universalism or of nationalism or of egoistic bureaucracy. The trend of our time is toward the social ownership of the means of production, but the issue of our time is one of the context in which this ownership and any continuing private ownership are to stand.

The issue of war and peace is even more pressing than that of social or private ownership. The question is put to us in individual and social terms—whether we shall personally be non-resisters or join in coercion, whether as a nation we shall hold aloof from conflict or participate in it. These are separate though similar issues.

To take up the latter first, it must be questioned whether it is the genuine issue in our time and nation. Directly contrary actions are being urged upon us for approximately the same reasons. We are being urged to defend America by aiding Great Britain, and to defend America by abstaining from participation in so-called foreign wars. Now it is, I believe, fairly clear that whichever action is taken in the context of self-defense will be followed by another action which can stand in the same context. If we participate in war under these auspices, we shall withdraw when national interests seem no longer threatened. If we abstain from participation now in the cause of national interest, we will engage in war as soon as national interests seem genuinely imperiled. It may not make much difference in the long run which of these things we do now as long as we make national defense our cause.

The real issue of our time is between internationalism or universalism and nationalism. Whether we shall stay at peace as those who unite with other nations in acceptance of full responsibility for maintaining orderly relations in the world, in acceptance of our full share of responsibility for the rise of international anarchy, with readiness to make real sacrifice of national sovereignty, or whether we shall stay at peace as those who wish to guard at all costs their own prosperity, righteousness and independence—that is a real issue. Whether we shall participate in war as those who are responsible for the fate of small nations, who know they are accessories in the international crimes and must try to mend what they have helped to break, who know they cannot enjoy the rights conferred by order among nations without performing corresponding duties, or whether we shall participate in war irresponsibly, self-sufficiently, and self-righteously—that also is a real issue.

Whether we go to war or do not, is not a matter of indifference. But I believe that the prior question must be settled first in the mind of any agitator for participation or non-participation, and that internationalist coercionists ought to spend more time exposing nationalistic coercionists, less in assailing internationalistic pacifists, while the latter should see that they are far more closely allied with internationalist exponents of participation in war than with isolationist peace propagandists. Whatever particular action we have chosen as our moral duty, our greater duty is to make that action conform to the context of our universal or our nationalist faith. For the most part our duty begins at this point, since to a very large extent the particular action we favor seems to be less a consequence of conscious moral choice than of sentiment, training, and the pressure of events. Moreover, this is a field in which we can do our own

duty instead of preaching to others what they ought to do.

It must be remembered in this connection that the larger issue is not the later issue; we cannot stay at peace nationalistically and then become internationalists; we cannot go to war nationalistically and become internationalists at a peace conference. The sentence which expresses nationalism or internationalism will modify the word, whether it be war or peace.

The personal problem of being pacifist or coercionist is very similar to the social one. Non-resistance may be an act in the context of fear for the self, physical, or moral; it may be an act in a context of love for the neighbor. What kind of non-resistance it is, what it means, and how it will become effective depends on context, or on the acts which precede and follow it. When it is the vocational non-resistance of one engaged in working for relief and for reconciliation it will stand in complete opposition to self-regarding non-resistance, whether the self which is regarded is the physical or the religious and moral self. The latter kind of non-resistance cannot reconcile, cannot reduce conflict but only encourage it by giving full sway to the brutal tendencies of men. So also, there are at least two kinds of coercionism; a soldier is not simply a soldier, a magistrate is not simply a magistrate. There is a coercionism which is self-regarding and one which puts itself under the discipline of a universal cause. The coercionism of a highwayman differs as radically from that of a soldier as the non-resistance of a coward differs from that of a Quaker.

So the real issue for any individual is not that of non-resistance or of coercionism but of the context. Or, when a man has determined what particular action he is to take he has only begun the real moral struggle; for now he must wrestle with himself and his actions to make each particular word and deed part of a continuous action which is redemptive rather than defensive.

So regarded, the strife between non-resisters and coercionists in the Christian community is not only useless; it is immoral, for in it each group tends to evade its own real moral problems, to escape its duty, and to justify itself.

III

It is evident now how the duty of the Christian church in our time must be conceived from this point of view. The duty of the church in America is to help the nation to become morally fit either to stay out or to enter into war. The unreadiness of our nation to do either is due to no lack of enthusiasm for either course. It is the unreadiness of a society which thinks in terms of self-defense—military, economic, moral—and which does not know that in history as in heaven he that seeks his own life shall lose it. It is a nation prepared on the one hand to commit the treachery of Munich, and on the other hand to wage the undeclared war which it despises when carried on by Japanese, Russians, or Germans. And much of this spiritual unreadiness of the nation to stay at peace or go to war in any constructive fashion is surely due to a church which tends on the one hand to attach a false significance to isolated acts, and on the other to dramatize itself and nation as Messianic saviour or Messianic sufferer. Hence it is a nation which is not prepared to accept its responsibility in a world that in sight and hearing as in faith is one, to acknowledge how heavily it has contributed to the erection of crosses on all the European and Asiatic Calvaries, to

seek to bring forth works worthy of repentance, to act in the faith that God will not desert His thieving crucified sons any more than His thorn-crowned chosen child. It is the duty of the church to show Pilate how to be just, and malefactors how to be repentant in the presence of Jesus, not how to exchange places with Him. It is the church's duty to point out the real, not the superficial issues, and to lead men and nations to the ultimate decision, which is not the decision of war or peace but of American peace or peace of God, American war or acceptance of the judgment of God.

Once more, this does not mean that Christianity is indifferent to the issues of the day. It only means that it is concerned with a solution of those issues which can have a place in the divine economy without the necessity of interminable new crucifixions.

Request

We have requests for the following back numbers of our journal: Vol. I, No. 1; Vol. II, No. 1; Vol. III, No. 2 and No. 3; Vol. V, No. 1.

If any readers would care to sell these issues we will be glad to purchase them at fifteen cents per copy.

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ATLANTIS

Being set on the idea
Of getting to Atlantis,
You have discovered of course
Only the Ship of Fools is
Making the voyage this year
As gales of exceptional force
Are expected, and that you
Must therefore be ready to
Behave absurdly enough
To pass for one of The Boys,
Appearing, at least, to love
Hard-liquor, horseplay, and noise.

Should storms, as may well happen,
Drive you to anchor a week
In some old harbour-city
Of Ionia, then speak
With her witty scholars, men
Who have proved there cannot be
Such a place as Atlantis.
Learn their logic, but notice
How their subtlety betrays
An enormous simple grief;
So may you learn all the ways
To doubt that you may believe.

If, later, you run aground
Among the headlands of Thrace
Where with torches all night long
A naked barbaric race
Leaps frenziedly to the sound
Of conch and dissonant gong,
On that stony savage shore
Strip off your clothes and dance; for
Unless you are capable
Of forgetting completely
About Atlantis, you will
Never finish your journey.

Again, should you come to gay
Carthage or Corinth, take part
In their endless gaiety;
And if in a bar some tart,
As she strokes your hair should say
"This is Atlantis, dearie,"
Listen with attentiveness
To her life-story; unless
You become acquainted now
With each refuge that tries to
Counterfeit Atlantis, how
Will you recognize the true?

Assuming you beach at last
Near Atlantis and begin
The terrible trek inland
Through squalid woods and frozen
Tundras where all are soon lost,
If forsaken then you stand,
Abysses everywhere,
Stones and snow, silence and air;
O remember the great dead
And honour the fate you are,
Travelling and tormented,
Dialectic and bizarre.

Stagger onward rejoicing;
And even then if, perhaps
Having actually got
To the last col, you collapse
With all Atlantis shining
Below you, yet you cannot
Descend, you should still be proud
Even to have been allowed
Just to peep at Atlantis
In a poetic vision;
Give thanks and lie down in peace,
Having seen your salvation.

All the little household gods
Have started crying, but say
Good-bye now and put to sea.
Farewell, my dear, farewell: May
Hermes, master of the roads,
And the four dwarf Kabiri
Protect and serve you always;
And may the Ancient of Days
Provide in all you must do
His invisible guidance,
Lifting up, dear, upon you
The light of His countenance.

W. H. AUDEN.

THE LIFE OF SPIRIT IN THE WORLD OF THE WILL TO POWER

By Donald Stewart

Protestant thinking is showing all the symptoms of weakness and indecision in the matter of war and the Christian conscience which the editors of *Fortune* called to our attention recently. We cannot get any stability to Protestant thought on this subject until we can frame our judgment to include the acknowledgment that war is *both* evil, *and* yet on occasions necessary, in a world where relative justice and not absolute love is the maximum possibility for sinful men.

To say it is evil, and to say only that, is to produce the irrelevant idealism which sunders the Christian from his obligations to participate in the ultimate defence of fundamental rights and principles when they are unjustly denied by the will to power. It treats the Christian's obligations in history as if they were concerned only with some abstract absolute of the spirit unrelated to, and so unaffected by the historic and political realities. This attitude which always moves its hearers by its adamant and righteous condemnation of war inevitably makes of its disciples parasites upon all those in society who struggle to preserve such relative justice as is possible within the limits set by man's pretensions to power. Unwilling to engage in open conflict (though man is all along engaged in the covert war of politics), it nevertheless gladly accepts the fruits of the struggle in the responsibilities of which it has defaulted.

On the other hand, to say that war is necessary and to say only that, is to indulge in the equally indefensible extreme which ends by *identifying* the causes of Caesar with the Cause of God. It submerges the transcendent and spiritual norm by which the Christian is called and claimed in the relativities of historic action and attainment, so that the spirit which actually transcends all man's battles is attenuated to the level of that over which it was meant to exercise judgment.

The Christian must have *both* perspectives—the spirit *in* history. His tension is born of his single existence in two dimensions, that of nature, involving his relations with the Kingdom of Caesar; and that of Grace, involving his relations with the Kingdom of God. These two realms or "cities" are *not separate*. They constitute two orders of one historic reality, namely, the single life of the Christian in history. (They are the inevitable outcome of the fact that creation is an adventure in love and freedom, where the earthly and heavenly struggle are compounded together.) The Kingdom of God is normative, but not amputated from the Kingdom of Caesar. The obligations of the former are always incapable of unqualified embodiment by virtue of the relativities and compromises imposed by the latter. The Christian is preserved from irrelevant idealism by the realization that the Will of God is always particularized for Him in some particular act within history. He is delivered, on the other hand, from the blasphemy which identifies man's causes with God's Cause by the knowledge of the transcendent and disturbing judgment passed upon his historic acts by the Spirit, whose child he seeks to be but whose demands he cannot encompass un-

qualifiedly. The Christian is always a sinner, but one who *knows* that he is, and there we have the witness to the two dimensions of the Christian, as a creature in history, but as a son of God in process of becoming.

Just now we are being told by the apostles of the idealistic wing of Christian thought that there is no place at all for the Christian in what they are pleased to call a "shooting war." To say there is, we are told, is to "surrender" our allegiance to the ways of Christian love. No better illustration of the blindness to the two dimensions of Christian obligation could be wanted than this charge. The service which this type of pacifism contributes to the safeguarding against the acceptance of relative actions as normative is both real and also conserved in the position we are seeking to outline. Nevertheless, this pacifism is naïve, abstract, and politically irrelevant.

It is naïve because it constantly assumes that if only Christians will refuse to participate in all forceful resistance, so that the militant will to power is not opposed by counter-military power, they can somehow make "mandatory" (*Christian Century,* January 1, 1941, page 16) upon the consciences of the men of will to power the surrender of their pretensions to sovereignty. They are apparently blind to the invitation which this act extends to the predatory will to expand without opposition. They do not discern the limitations which the compound nature of society and man place upon the ability to embody the constraints of love. It is abstract because it delimits the anguish which in reality covers *all* man's existence to this *one* issue of war. It treats war as if it were the unique case of man's violation of the law of love, whereas it is in fact but the most glaring example of the relativities in which the Christian is set by virtue of his status in history. Sin is an actuality which is the outcome of man's spiritual stature whereby he can deny, if he chooses, his dependence and seek to live autonomously and sovereign—"ye shall be as Gods knowing good and evil." But man is able to live authentically, as a "humanus," only as a child of God—i. e. within the limits which the Spirit imposes upon his undisciplined desires. This tension exists most acutely within the Christian conscience, but it is raised also in the compromises which are inevitably set up by virtue of the juxtaposition in civil life of the Christian, and those who neither acknowledge the Christian presuppositions nor make the Christian commitment. The Christian is therefore involved, *long before* the end-term example of war, in seeking to restrain the will to power by the use of counter power. He always preserves the transcendent judgment which the spirit by which he is claimed passes upon his relative acts in history. But he cannot escape thereby the inevitable involvement in acts which are not only not unqualified embodiments of love, but are always susceptible of being prostituted for the furtherance of the will to power rather than its defeat. The Christian is "saved" only by faith from out and out non-Christian existence. "All politics is war by covert means and all war is simply politics out in the open," said Salvador de Madariaga. It is, therefore, just as incumbent upon the Christian to pit the restraint of one power through another against the counter restraint of the first power through its opponent at "covert" levels as at the "overt" levels. The anguish born of the relativity of these deeds *and* yet their necessity in history, invades the whole area of the Christian's actions.

In the third place, this idealistic coun-

sel is politically irrelevant. It does not connect the church to the civil order; it severs it by a spurious attempt to absolve the Christian from his civil relations and responsibilities. There is surely no quicker way to discredit the church in the moment of postwar reconstruction than for the church in the hour of struggle to utter counsel which shows that she considers those, who in their responsible statesmanship and citizenship are engaged in the tragic struggle to preserve a balance of relative justice, to have no place within the Christian perspective of the Spirit and the authentic life of the Church.

The acknowledgment of the necessity of warlike resistance does not thereby bless it as the embodiment of God's unqualified love, as pacifists seem to assume. It is acknowledged as a relative necessity in a relative world where Caesar and "God," force and love, are two simultaneous realities in this world, where the life of the Spirit, and the life which is apart from God but which is convinced it is itself the life of God, are ever in conflict.

Life within history imposes on the Christian at one and the same time the obligations to acknowledge the claims of the Spirit upon him, *and* the obligation to effect the maximum of spiritual order in a world where absolute love is impossible. The tension of the Christian's life arises from the obligations of love, and with them the simultaneous necessity of balancing power against counter power in all his acts as a citizen of and within the state. God and Caesar were created *in* relation and the church cannot divorce them. To do so simply results in the astonishing spectacle which some pacifism is leading us to, namely, the folly of a Kingdom of God amputated from all realistic relations with the Kingdom of Caesar, seeking to restrain a Kingdom of Caesar which has severed all relations with any Kingdom of God. When this occurs, the tragedy to which Mumford refers takes place, and the moment when war has become the absolute evil to most men is the very moment when it has become the absolute good to the nihilists. No Christian conscience can evade its complicity in the permission of the uncontested expansion of tyranny by its acquiescence through non-resistance.

It is plain that the church, like the gospel she proclaims, must transcend the battle, but it is also clear that unless she is to sustain no relevant leverage upon the world of power politics, the church must bear some relation to the participants in all human struggles without regard to battle lines. She must have some word that, without identifying the spirit of love with the arena of conflict, nevertheless relates the one to the other in some significant relation. The Church must somehow indicate the pertinence of man's relative acts to the absolute law of love. This can be done if the church preserves her gospel from emasculating identification with the relative gospels of Caesar's world by the proclamation of the Word, itself Spirit, which transcends the battle and all the battlers. The church must also, and simultaneously, preserve her significant relations to the relevance of man's battles, and the causes of relative justice compounded with injustice which they portend. This can be done only by the acknowledgment that the life of the spirit must recognize, not deny, the obligation of the Christian citizen to seek to preserve the exercise of political power in the maximum service of love. But since unqualified love is impossible at this political level, his relevant task becomes the exercise of power

in the service of the maximum of relative justice.

This applies all the way from the contentions of power and counter power at the polls, to collective bargaining, and on to the hour, when the necessity arises, for the warlike resistance to the anarchic barbarism of a will to power which denies the very concept of justice.

This holds in spite of the instability of warriors and the fact that war is susceptible both to service in the interests of the pretensions to power, *and* also as a rod of correction upon antecedent injustice. War is thus the most evident reminder that as first one contender and then another arises to challenge the pretensions of his predecessor, he confronts the world with God's transcendent judgment upon an evil generation. But as each one successively succumbs to the evil he originally fought, he witnesses to the instability of the human heart and human history. It also illustrates the recurrence of the absolute necessity to defend a relative good (i. e. a maximum of relative of justice) by relative deeds in order to insure the *possibility* of the existence within history of some supranational norm, which shall judge all individual and national action for the fractional and relative good that it is. This responsibility the Christian cannot possibly escape without defaulting.

In the light of this, how fatuous and blind, and sometimes inexcusably pious is the glib oratory of the "I will not support or bless war" type, which thinks this abstension is the relevant remark par excellence. It suffers the pious illusions of the sophomores of the 1920's and early 30's. It still thinks the issue is "peace or war." It conceives that those who discern the necessity of warlike resistance are itching for war, and have identified Christianity with the state, and the cause of Caesar with the Cause of God. It is all such hopeless over-simplification of the compound nature of society and the complexity of Christian judgment and obligations.

The Christian is obligated as a citizen of the civil order and as a child of God in history to do his utmost to insure the *maximum of possibility* for the attainment of relative justice. War cannot *produce* democracy, it can only effect the *possibility of democracy*. War, at its best, can only insure that a single power shall not alone rule the destinies of the world or the majority thereof. Solitary power always succumbs to the temptation to play the role of God. As Lord Acton put it, "Power always corrupts, and absolute power always corrupts absolutely." Only the existence of two or more robust and powerful nations can insure even the acknowledgment of the supranational norm thus insuring the *possibility* but not the *actuality* of a maximum of relative justice between nations. (The same principle holds for groups within the national life and for the democracy of intranational civil order.)

It is healthier to have a world in which God and Spirit are acknowledged to be supreme and to have some relevant relation to history and civilization, than to permit the uncontested rise to political supremacy in the world either of a single demonic power, or of a single national unit. The latter will, in the hour of its triumph, be most certainly tempted to usurp the place of the Creator and to assume the final blasphemy, i. e. that the life without God is itself the life of God, the only sacred reality. The will to power can be brought to forsake its anarchy only when it is sobered by the cost of its anarchic pretensions. This involves its resistance, and in the final instance, it means war.

The acknowledgment of supranational norms brought about by the restraints imposed by counter-power is to be desired, even though it may often be only hypocritically conceded and frequently disobeyed. For the hypocrite who admits the canon that can bring him under judgment is surely preferable to the nihilist who confounds all truth and standards by the obliteration of all distinction between man the creature and his ground the Creator Spirit (cf. Rom. I).

Let us be clear that, while the act of war is sometimes necessary to preserve the equilibrium of political forces, yet the existence of democracy depends upon what men do with the interregnum called "peace." War itself can provide at best only the *possibility* and *not the actuality* of democratic life and mutual existence. It can insure this *possibility* by providing political conditions where no single power shall exist without the limitations which alone counter power of approximate proportions can impose upon the pretensions to autonomy and sovereignty. This truth of international order is equally true of the internal life of the nation and the problems of justice and equity there. This obligation to insure the *maximum of possibility* for relative justice is then one of the major Christian responsibilities which must be incorporated in the outlook of the Church which has not divorced the realm of Caesar and the Kingdom of God, but which relates them in the tension of Christian judgment and the responsibility of sinful man.

The Christian, however, must seek also to attain the maximum of *actuality* or embodiment for the forces of mutuality and love. He is obligated to do all he can to preserve the absolute judgments of the Christian imperative from putrefaction through their transmutation into the relativities of politics and history. Both relevant and discernible embodiment of the Spirit, *and* the preservation of the distinction between the Spirit and history, become the Christian's task.

In periods of the interregnum between overt war, in the period of the "covert war" of "peace" when "war" is absent, the Christian therefore will seek to set in motion the maximum of positive political and social forces for the purpose of establishing the maximum presence of justice. By virtue of the perennial judgment of the transcendent norm of Christian love upon the relativities of political life and existence, and by the simultaneous attempt to embody its demands even though the attempts pass in turn under the same transcendent judgment—by this means the Christian seeks to engender those forces, political and otherwise, which are calculated under God to mitigate the effects, and to transform the pattern of evil in human civilization. Only so does he preserve a measure of the God-regarding spirit in a worldly generation.

By the same token during the "overt war" of open hostilities, the Christian confesses his nation's sins against which he knows the foe to be the rod of God's correction. He also keeps his nation's conscience sensitive, so far as he can, to the temptation to vengeance and the consequent temptation to deny its subordination to the supranational norms of the Spirit and the control of God. This duty, however, does not blind him to the simultaneous recognition of the service which his nation's resistance to the counter-offensive of the foe contributes, in an evil world, to the preservation of a maximum possibility for relative justice, where absolute love is impossible, and where non-resistance involves open-eyed acquiescence in the expansion of tyranny.

CHRISTIANITY Versus IDEALISM

By Holmes Hartshorne

Someone has said that man is an incurable idealist. If so, the trouble is that he does not realize that it is a disease. Idealism is one of the diseases from which modern man is suffering, which has warped his outlook and destroyed his sight. It is a reason why he is basically so irreligious: because he is—or at least he has been—an idealist. He has trusted his ideals and his reason which has given him those ideals. He has believed in Man, ideal Man, in limitless human progress and the spirit of man to work and win and build him the city of God. Modern man has put faith in his ideals—in the power of his reason to show him what life ought to be and make him be it. That is the basis of our contemporary religion of progress—one of the few religions left.

Modern man had to trust something, and he chose himself. He had discovered his reason and was properly impressed. He discovered himself and judged himself good. That is why so many modern men are good men. Good men are dangerous men—proud, unkind, belligerent, intolerant. They know what is right, because they are always right. There is no humility in a good man: he has the divine right on his side—because there is no other god. Good people, idealistic people, have clean hands, but the work of life is dirty, and men's best efforts are stained with the soil of self. Good people have pure minds, but the minds of the living are dark with passion, pride, and lust for power. Good people love their neighbors; ordinary people love their neighbors and love themselves more. Good people are inhuman, for they are saints not sinners. They make mistakes, to be sure, they fall short of their ideals; but basically they are fine and good, sure of their motives, sure of their hearts' purity. Modern men are—or at least have been—good men—dangerous men who know that they are good. That is a reason why they are so profoundly irreligious.

But modern man is changing. The reason is that idealism is always ultimately frustrated—frustrated by the malevolent fact of human evil; for man is that strange compound of God and beast that says one thing and means another, that loves greatly and hates as he does it, that trusts himself inordinately and thinks up clever theories to account for his double-crossing. Idealism is always frustrated—frustrated by man, who is content to have ideals but is in rebellion against being them, who swears allegiance to all that is good and holy and shrewdly schemes to profit from it by any means fair or foul. Man loves the ideal; but he loves power and prestige more. Idealism means blindness—means basic dishonesty, a studied unwillingness to look at life's dirt and see it for what it is. But modern man is changing. The end of an era, the disintegration of a culture, the crisis of a civilization, makes idealism difficult to maintain. When our world is breaking and power stalks naked and shameless among its ruins, it is not easy to remain an idealist. Modern man is therefore in the process of being disillusioned. You can thank Freud, you can thank Hitler, you can thank God. That depends on you.

The end of disillusionment is despair.

Between man and his ideal is the immeasurable abyss of humanity's rottenness—the rottenness of humanity's sinners and the more detestable rottenness of humanity's saints. Between man and his ideal is himself. Whenever man comes to himself, sees himself as he is, he despairs. Now modern man has been an idealist. That is, he has been blind. Now he is in the grim process of disillusionment. That is why bewilderment and fanaticism and despair characterize so much of contemporary life. Modern idealistic man is getting desperate. The rationalized form of despair is fatalism. I suspect that that is going to be the new story which modern man will tell of himself. It is one of those last desperate intellectualistic efforts to escape despair itself. If we cannot trust our ideals and visions, if we cannot look for truth because we are all liars, cannot look for peace because our love is at best an armed truce, cannot maintain values because too much depends upon what we ate for breakfast and how actively our glands are functioning, then we will invent some clever theories to explain our ideals away. If we can't play God, we'll play rat. And so Freud, with magnificent insight, tells a story of man's darkness—of that chaotic deep of meaningless desire which must make concessions to its world to live, of the conscious *ego* which this *id* creates as its servant and tool: a mind defined by the illusion of meaning and value and freedom. One might compare, says Freud, the relation of the *ego* to the *id* with that between a rider and his horse, in which the rider is obliged to guide his horse in the direction in which it itself wants to go. Less profound and therefore more popular is Dr. Watson's story, behaviorism, which scientifically describes man's behavior and then naively concludes that he is his behavior. And that suggests the charming picture of a machine that calls itself by name.

There is, then, a strong fatalistic reaction to the pretensions of man's idealistic thinking about himself. Modern man has failed conspicuously at playing God, and his world is going to pot. Now he is busy debunking life, busy discovering "how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable seem to him all the uses of this world." If he can't be God, at least he can be beast—and like it! Now, perhaps, the truth is that there is no truth. It may be that morality is weakness, and power is man's glory and his destiny. Perhaps it only remains for men of power to emerge from the shelter of morals and culture, and crush by cruel might the spirit of every opposition. Modern idealistic man, disillusioned, is tempted to become a cruel man. He is tempted to quit being a good man and become a cruel man. That is easy: for good men are cruel men who make pretensions to goodness. Cruel men, like good men, are proud, unkind, belligerent, intolerant. There is no humility in a cruel man: like the good man, he has the divine right on his side—because he is the only god. Cruel men are inhuman—yet not as beasts are inhuman, for a beast can be only a beast. Cruel men could have been men and are not: therefore they are worse than beasts and their cruelty more cruel than the beast's. Modern man is going to be that way, I suspect. It is another reason why he is profoundly irreligious.

Some modern men are good men. Some are cruel men. Neither good men nor cruel men have humility, for man is humble only before God. Modern men are not humble, because they do not believe in God. They are right or they are powerful, depending upon whether

they are good or cruel, and in their righteousness and in their power they are ruthless. Of course most men who live today are not modern at all: they are just men. Modern man is, for that matter, man. Everyone of us is man—the measure of all things, veritable God, who embraces his world, his life, his history, his gods; man—a veritable beast, a curious product of the evolutionary process, a creature in nature, bound by her laws of generation and decay,

Fixed like a plant to his peculiar spot
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot.

Modern man is, after all, man—both God and beast, a creature infinite and boundless, yet bounded and finite, who forever asks for his life's eternal meaning, yet knows that every answer that he gives, be it ever so clever, is his own, and he cannot believe it. Man, a beast with all the problems of a beast: problems of food and shelter and sleep and sex, yet to himself one inescapable problem:

To be or not to be: that is the question.

Man, who can dream of peace and love and human brotherhood—and commit suicide. Man who can think earnestly about himself and then conclude that he isn't. Modern man, like every man, is confronted by the problem of himself: who am I, and what is my relation to what it's all about? What is the ultimate meaning of this human existence? that is the question. Modern man cries, "I am the answer," and promptly his world goes to hell; and then he cries, "There is no answer," and his neuroses call him a liar. He trusts himself, only to discover that he is false; then he trusts nothing, and believes in that with a desperate faith. So is he miserable and must persuade himself that he is not: he has a high old time of it all and secretly wishes that he were dead!

Man: the inescapable question and the inevitable lie; that is the tragedy of human existence which modern man won't hear of—for he believes his lies, or claims to. He decides that he is nothing and believes it. He figures out that he is a machine and then argues for the truth of his contention. He delights to experiment on rats and guinea pigs to win some understanding of his mind. He calls truth an illusion and maintains the truth of his proposition. He is a clever fool, modern man, telling plausible tales about himself and his world and all eternity, yet not daring to believe a one. For man is question, not answer, defined by the eternal Why, and to give an answer is to beg the question. Man is a creature who must ask for eternity and find it in time, yet time can never give man eternity, and he hungers and is not filled.

Of course some modern men are still idealists. They call themselves, more often than not, religious men. Life is a wonderful, beautiful thing, because the spirit of man is a wonderful, beautiful thing. Man is basically noble, good, honorable—"So are we all, all honorable men!" History is the story of man's befitting excellence coming to fulfillment—the triumph of reason over error, the emergence of the sweet reasonableness of the human spirit. Thus modern men have faith in education, whereby that spirit shall be led forth in beauty and men shall see the glory of the Lord—for the god of modern man is himself. Quite a jolt it is to discover that this god is in half his ways a beast! Some modern men have not been jolted by that: they have accepted it, and we have fascism and fascists. But many who discover it

are jolted, vastly upset to see the flaming spirit of their idealistic faith reduced to a bit of blackened ash.

Modern man has reduced religion to morality or to illusion. As an idealist he conceives of religion as moralism: religion is the enterprise of being good, the church is the mechanics of it. Christianity reduces to moral precepts and the ideals and principles of Jesus. Idealism never gets beyond moralism. It knows nothing of the tragic depths of man: of his pride and lust for power. It trusts man: trusts his reason to show him what he ought to be and to make him that. Religious idealism or idealistic religion sanctify man's pretensions to virtue and purity, and piously gloss over his dishonesty and greed as normal steps in his pathway to perfection. Everything in life is gloriously religious—because everything is very human and very pretentious and very false. Idealistic man puts religion in the appeal class: it appeals because it gives a man a lift like a Camel, it magnifies, it satisfies. It makes no demands upon one: it asks only assent to ideals. That costs nothing.

Fatalism, on the other hand, reduces religion to faith in an illusion. Marx called it the opiate of the people: the means whereby the bourgeoisie sanctified and stabilized their position of economic power. Freud called it an illusion. Many modern men call it the bunk—not as eloquent but unequivocal. For these moderns observe (to give them due credit) that men create gods in their own images. Created gods, they conclude, are the bunk. But are they? Created gods are symbols of man's pretension to be God, symbols of his dark will to power and spiritual pride. Created gods are powerful, terrible, demonic. Created gods are creative, for they magnify man's will to power and drive him to glorify them in the fulfillment of that will to be powerful; but created gods are also destructive, for they set man against man, power against power, and kill. Created gods are demonic, both creative and destructive at the same time, who destroy in the end their makers. Faith in demonic gods of soil and blood, who demand for their worshippers Lebensraum and the holy recognition due purity of blood, is the most powerful force in contemporary history. All history is religious history, for men serve only gods. Never disparage created gods, for you may earn their ill favor and thereby be destroyed. Created gods are intolerant, cruel, terrible—for created gods are the symbol of man's will to be God. Only man is cruel, for only man tries to be God and is not.

Man, observed Martin Luther, cannot naturally will God to be God, because he always wants to be God himself. Men create gods, call themselves God, because they lust after the power that only God could have. Modern man has called himself God, and so he calls religion an illusion. He has said, "God is dead," and by that word he has called into being a pantheon of demons—little, vain, strutting men, terrible in their cruel vengeance, bent on each other's spiritual destruction, so that each can prove himself a god and show that God is dead.

Modern man has built his civilization on a lie: the lie that he is God and God is dead. That is a reasonable, plausible conviction. Man is reason—surely that—reason infinite, eternal, immutable, unchanging. Man is creative reason, in every moment transcending himself, his life, and his world. For man is a question, a question about himself; and in that question he transcends himself (though never escapes himself). Man is

the measure of all things. Man is divine. But man is not that only: man is also creature, pitiable bit of animated mud, some few cents worth of chemicals, a creature bound by natural law: by time and space and cause and decay. "And how," asks Santayana, "should a picture of the infinite universe descend into the twilight of the animal mind beset by countless passions and lost in the world that bore it?" Only because man is God and beast—both and therefore neither, because he is reason and passion, love and lust, glory and shame; because man is an inescapable question, the question for the ultimate meaning of himself, the question, the burning question for God. Modern man has given an answer to that question, and that answer is himself. That answer is a lie. He has called himself God, and he will inevitably be destroyed, because he is not God, because he is beast as well as God, because the god which he has created in his own image is a demonic god and will destroy him.

That is the tragedy of our period. Without God the people perish—perish crying, "I am God!" perish crying, "There is no God!", perish crying . . . perish in misery and disillusionment and strife, perish hurling their proud ideals to the dome of heaven, perish by the wrath of the gods they have created. That is your today—a day of wrath, a day of destruction. You will be made to like it, you will be made to love it, you will be made to worship it. You will be told that life is glorious and beautiful and that man's free spirit can raise him above the strife of history's evil; and then you will be told that man is a brute and that we are "no fallen angels but primates on the march." And you will believe it all, for it is the word of gods—of men who are gods—good men and cruel men—but gods. It's tragic but it's real: it's the end of an era, the twilight of the gods.

Now today we stand at the edge of night. The future is darkness. It comes over us quietly, inevitably, as optimists cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, and in the gathering dusk proclaim the dawn. But the world, for all its fitful flickerings of redemption, has no light: it is darkness not light. But men will not therefore turn to God, for men naturally hate God, despise God; for God it is who extinguishes their lamps to show them the vastness of His night. Men never turn to God, never seek out God; for God always destroys them, destroys their security and power and vain pretensions to be God. God humbles men; modern man is not and will not be humble, for he is determined to be God. Modern man despises God and seeks to kill Him. (Where God steps into life there is always a crucifixion.) The hope of humanity is not that men will turn to God, for they will not. Man's hope, if he has any, is in being turned to God. Only a miracle could do that: the miracle of the divine spirit in men's hearts working through love. That is Christian faith. But that brings us to the foolishness of faith. Faith is always foolishness or miracle: it is nonsense or the saving power of God. There is no argument for faith. But the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men; for by their wisdom modern men perish; by the foolishness of the Cross those who have faith may yet live.

A LETTER FROM SOUTH AMERICA

By Paul F. Iverson

One of the most interesting aspects of ving in South America in these days is eading the articles which are published the States about what is happening to ese "colorful Republics south of the io Grande." From what most of these eces say one is generally led to believe at the South American Republics are pidly falling into the Axis orbit. Such r example, is the tenor of correspond- t Harold Callender's article which ap- ared in the *New York Times* of April . He tells his readers that the most fective weapons of the Axis powers in is country of Colombia are Anti- mericanistic and Hispanistic propa- nda. This dwelling upon the tangible rface manifestations of totalitarian netration into these lands is typical of e articles written by Callender, unther (who got "inside" of Colombia eight days), et al. They all look for d find these exterior symptoms of Nazi fluence.

To those of us who live for more than ew days among the folk of these Re- blics there is a far more significant nptom of Axis penetration than the iscoveries" that the journalistic writers e flaunting before North Americans their articles. Granted there are such ngible manifestations such as the Anti- mericanism and Hispanism of some oups and publications, not to mention e strong organizations of German mer- ants in certain cities, the many Ger- n pilots employed or formerly em- oyed on South American Airlines, the e-war strength of German goods in uth American markets and the desire on the part of many merchants and consumers to have these goods again flowing in the market, the real economic need of exportation of agriculture products to the European continent, and the presence and pressure of a large "diplomatic corps" in many of the Republics. All these signs are quickly to be read by one who runs, and do in themselves indicate Axis inroads. But they do not appear to be the most important and alarming signs to those of us who are acquainted with the less tangible and not quite so apparent reality of the mental and emotional state of these people. It is in this area of the life of these peoples that the influence of the power politicians has had its most telling effect. Let me illustrate this by an account or two.

This was shown in an incident related by Ludwig Bemelman in his book called *The Donkey Inside* in which he tells how one day in Ecuador as he was entering his hotel with a native guide, the guide said upon seeing overhead two military aircraft, "One day they will come over, hundreds of them, and kill us all with bombs that come down."

"Who," asked Bemelman, "will come and do that?"

"Oh, the damned Yanquis," replied the guide.

"And who told you that?"

"Why my brother; everybody knows it. We've read it in a magazine called *The Voice of the Worker.*" (A pro-Nazi sheet.) Even more indicative of mental confusion and emotional fear is an incident which occured not long ago in Medellin, one of the large cities of this

country. One night sometime after darkness had come over the city, a large plane was heard approaching the city. Flying very low, its roar soon attracted the greater part of the populace who ran excitedly into the streets questioning the reason for this nocturnal visit. (The Airlines do not operate in mountainous South American countries at night.) As the plane continued to cruise over the city wonder turned to alarm. Hurried efforts with improvised flares were made at the local airport in the belief that the pilot wished to land. In the meantime wild rumors began to run through the crowd about the identity and purpose of the craft's mission. During this time excited city officials, also uneasy, called the War Ministry in the Capital which reported that all national military planes were in their hangars. When this report got abroad panic ran riot among the folk of the city—some taking to the open country, others to basements and cellars. By this time the unknown night visitor was making his last turn over the city and quickly made off into the darkness. To this day the identity of this craft remains unknown as it did not come down in any airport in the country. Conjecture a few days later accredited it to an "unknown" naval vessel operating in the Pacific.

Such an alarmistic and dread-filled state of mind among the common people of the country is not understandable until one gives the listening ear to the daily conversation of these people. Then one hears such remarks as did Bemelman in Ecuador of invasion by air by one power or another, of secret enemies, and foreign armies drilling in the unfrequented hinterlands. Even your own servant may ask you such questions as "Do you think that the Germans will come to get us too?" This then is clearly the seed bed in which fascist conquest finds its soil. It is not unlike the devastation so completely accomplished among many of the civilian populations of the fifteen countries that the Axis powers have already conquered: a devastation of morale that was so complete that it ruined all possibility of movement on the part of efficient and highly organized armies, preventing necessary operations. Such is the situation among the lower, uneducated, and illiterate classes which constitute about two-thirds or more of the population of these lands.

The upper classes manifest the same emotional and mental state by signs which are as equally disastrous to effective contra-axis politics. Either they hide their fear behind bold talk of South American strength and armed power (most of these Republics have no navy —Colombia has three antiquated vessels —small armies with little modern equipment, and no industrial plants necessary to produce the materials necessary to carry on a modern war), or they resort to the familiar tactic, though it is tacitly denied, of playing the game with the victorious power. (There has been a noticeable increase in pro-axis sentiment since the brilliantly executed Balkan campaign.) Thus the upper, educated, and governing classes are also in their own kind of panic.

This, it appears to those of us who are North Americans "inside" Latin America for other than journalistic reasons, is the first campaign against the Western Hemisphere, and it seems to have already been won. This is the kind of spiritual situation that is already ripe for a successful terroristic military campaign, and will continue to be so as long as the Axis powers continue to demonstrate their might on the fields of battle.

The typical campaign of a few highly ained troops with modern equipment, ided by a few well placed "fifth column- ts," would turn the trick unless some ther power got here "fust'us with the ost'us men."

It is really then by this less tangible oute of demoralization that the Latin American countries are falling into the orbit of the Axis. The "internal revolution," the campaign against the morale is already far advanced. The actual military occupation, despite the complacency of John T. Flynn and his fellow believers, is only a secondary and follow up movement.

Fellowship Conference

The spring retreat of the Fellowship f Socialist Christians was held at Bound rook, New Jersey, on May 15th and 6th. The earlier date and conflicting onferences reduced our attendance this ear to forty-five, but it was a valuable nference.

Professor Ernest Johnson analyzed the gnificance of the Malvern conference eport in the first session, and there was me discussion of the significance of e changes which the Archbishop of ork had made in the official findings in ntrast to those provisionally published. the evening meeting Professor Eduard eimann, in the absence of Franz Dan- ls, led a discussion of problems of justice in a defense economy. A whole morning was devoted to a discussion under the leadership of Miss Dorothy Fosdick of the attitude of radical Christians to issues of the day. Reinhold Niebuhr spoke in the final session on "Absolute Religious Commitment and Relative Political Decisions."

The treasurer reported a fairly healthy state of the treasury. A fifty dollar contribution from a reader of *Christianity and Society* for the budget of our quarterly was reported and received with gratitude and great satisfaction.

A committee under the chairmanship of the Reverend Rollo May was appointed to prepare the program of the Fall conference.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE AMERICAN DREAM, *by Sherwood Eddy*. Harper and Brothers, New York. $2.90.

Sherwood Eddy, one of the truly great prophets of American Protestantism, has found time in the midst of his enormously busy and useful life to write a book on the American tradition. The title suggests the theme. Taking the Kingdom of God as the religious ideal which underlies American history and the American dream as the secular ideal, Eddy has undertaken to trace both strands of tradition as they have interwoven to produce the events and characters of our past and present. The result is a book which, if not always orderly in the sequence of its argument or complete in its treatment of any one episode or theme, is nevertheless loaded with interesting facts and rich in its insights.

The reader sees the big parade of American history not through the eyes of a trained historian, viewing its passing scenes with critical and academic detachment but through the eyes of a prophet and moralist, who condemns its foibles and its iniquities and extols its virtues. The beginnings of the American tradition are traced to the pre-reformation and Reformation movements of Europe. The events and characters of colonial America, its heroes and villains, its tragedies and its high achievements pass in review. The revolution, the struggle of Federalism and Democracy, the frontier and its homespun leaders, the slavery issue and the civil war are all interpreted from the author's equalitarian democratic viewpoint. Eddy's prophetic indignation at exploitation and aggrandizement rise to a white heat as he describes what are termed, "the tragic era and the gilded age." There is a chapter which deals in rather summary fashion with the religious and spiritual implications of American literature, from Emerson to Hemingway and MacLeish. In equally summary fashion the role of institutional religion in American life is described, with special reference to the rise and spread of the social gospel.

The book concludes with a discussion of "the present issue," and "America's duty," on which Eddy's ideas are clear and forthright: "We face today a militarized national socialism which seeks to force each isolated nation to enter a 'new order' of slave states in a totalitarian Europe and that now challenges the entire world. Here is the apocalypse of violence which would wreak its vengeance on whole races, classes, and nations in the conquest of the world by Germans, whose Leader declares that this super-race, 'becomes one day lord of the earth.' . . . In striking contrast to this, in Great Britain there is a conscious effort on the part of the religious and liberal forces to build the new world on the basis of the Kingdom of God and the democratic dream even amid the hell of war. . . . In the judgment of the writer, we should render every possible aid to Great Britain and that not as 'Uncle Shylock' to fatten our profits out of what will in time be an impoverished country. The most desperate need of the world today, however is not for money, nor munitions, nor material things; but in the realm of spirit where we are weakest. It is here that we need

enewal, reformation, and moral revolu-ion" (pages 299-303).

This book raises a whole flock of issues, mong which perhaps the most basic and he most important is the author's as-umption that the Kingdom of God epresents America's religious ideal, and he American Dream, its secular ideal, nd that despite occasional frictions and ensions the two traditions have existed ogether, if not always harmoniously, at east in a state of equilibrium. What is acking here is an analysis of what is neant by the terms, religious and secu-ar. Indeed the distinction as it exists at he present time is not infrequently read ack into American history, imposed on en and events in a quite unhistorical shion. But the most important blind-ot in the treatment is Eddy's apparent bliviousness to the implicit religiosity f the American Dream. Implicit in all ationalism are powerful overtones of ibal religion. Eddy sees this clearly in e case of Germany and other nations, ut nowhere does his treatment of the merican Dream reveal any clear aware-ess of the religious nationalism implied it. Indeed there are times when he imself seems to fall victim to it. ". . . o other cosmopolitan nation in history as ever conceived in liberty and dedi-ated to such a high spiritual purpose" age 9). "No country on earth was ever ounded on deeper religious foundations. his was America's priceless heritage. combined a religious ideal of the ingdom of God and a secular American ream" (page 77). Eddy's life is the st proof that he does not consciously tend the sort of religious nationalism hich these words and others like them em to imply. Yet the words are there; d they illustrate the religiously am-guous character of the type of thought question. If what is meant by this term is that the God of all the earth, of all history and all nations has given special gifts and imposed special responsibilities upon America, then it may be a profoundly Christian concept. But all too often, this is not the clear meaning. The American Dream invokes a tribal faith and a tribal God, religiously not one whit more acceptable to Biblical religion than German or Japanese tribalism. Now I clearly realize that Eddy has not intended anything like this in his description of the American Dream, but his failure to realize the religious overtones in this concept and to deal adequately with them has left his book wide-open to interpretations and charges of this kind. It is indeed ambiguities of this sort, which in a day like the present, make our growing intellectual nationalism a very dangerous thing. If there is any single contribution that Christian thinkers ought to be able to make to such discussions, it is a clear and realistic discussion of the implications of nationalism.

The book raises an important linguistic issue that applies equally well to wide areas of religious and theological discussion in this country, in its use of the terms, "materialistic" and "spiritual." "Material" and "materialistic" are used in the double and therefore ambiguous sense of mercenary, selfish, or greedy, and of a philosophic or ontological doctrine according to which only matter is ultimately real. It is obvious that these are separate and distinct meanings, yet in all too many theological discussions they are joined together so that the philosophic doctrine is given a moral taint (which however true in the ultimate sense does not correspond to the facts in a great many immediate instances), and the moral meaning is given an ontological foundation which,

among other things, is quite unbiblical and contrary to its meaning in the history of Christian thought. Likewise the terms, "spiritual" and "spiritual religion" have taken on a generality and ambiguity that has robbed them of clear meaning and made them simply emotional symbols. Extended analysis of these issues is not possible within the space of a brief review; one must simply content himself with the remark that the use of words such as these muddies the waters of discourse.

The Kingdom of God and the American Dream is a perplexing book. Judged as historical writing in the academic sense it leaves much to be desired. But there is a solid substance in the book which lifts it above such criticism and makes it both a fascinating and illuminating study. This substance derives from the personality of the writer. Sherwood Eddy is not a trained historian and makes no pretense to be one. He is a prophet and a moralist in the best sense of those words; and both the prophet's insight and the moralist's imperative have found their way into his book, making it a stimulating study of what we Americans are in the sight of God, and what we must do to be saved.

JOHN HUTCHISON.

THE MEANING OF REVELATION, *by H. Richard Niebuhr.* Macmillan, New York. x-196 pp. $2.00.

This book is the outcome of the Nathaniel W. Taylor Lectures given in the Divinity School of Yale University in April, 1940. It is obviously a product of prolonged reflection and a vast amount of study in the several fields relevant to the subject. The author writes as a Christian theologian: his conception of revelation is inseparable from his Christology. He writes as a philosopher: he avoids arbitrary presuppositions and persistently refuses to take refuge in authority. He writes as a truly modern man: he takes full account of modern relativism and skepticism, and ignores nothing that a modern theologian should know and appreciate. His respect for the Christian tradition, for fair play in the use of reason, and for the insights of the modern man, makes this a truly original and adequate book on a very difficult subject.

Dr. Niebuhr recognizes that the idea of revelation cannot be established on the basis of "scientific" history. The arm-chair historian who separates himself from the history he studies and merely looks at it as one does at a play, discovers only events which stand in certain causal relationships to other events. He sees sequences in time and space, impersonal facts enclosed in systems of necessity, and meaningless succession of phenomena. He sees all things as relative to each other, having no reference to anything beyond themselves and revealing no transcendent norms and meanings. Hence his own point of view makes it impossible that he should discover ultimate meaning or unity in history.

"By revelation in our history, then, we mean that special occasion which provides us with an image by means of which all the occasions of personal and common life become intelligible" (p. 109). The ideas of revelation and "personal and common life" are mutually inseparable. Revelation is historical, and the historical is personal and common. When history is viewed as "the story of our life," as a procession of personal careers in which we seek for the meanings of events to ourselves, it ap-

ears as vitally remembered past. When ve enter into the historical process as articipating persons, and seek to under-tand it in relation to our own life and lestiny, we acquire an "internal view" f history and perceive its truths in a new vay. History thus becomes intelligible o us; it means something for our lives. t presents us with events which throw ight on our own personal situation. When we thus go to the facts of history nquiring about our own life and destiny, here is revelation.

If revelation emerges in an "internal articipation" in history, different his-ories must yield different revelations. This is to admit the obvious fact that hose who participate in different his-ories see "the meaning of life," differ-ntly. Dr. Niebuhr recognizes that in o far as men have different histories, ney cannot argue each other into seeing he meaning of life in the same event. Revelation is a matter of faith, and faith a matter of history. And yet, different stories are not so different that a per-on cannot be converted into another ith. What occasions conversion is reaching, confession of faith which is a lling of "the story of our life." Men cept a story as revelation when they ter into a history and believe that an ent in that history reveals the mean-g of their lives.

Dr. Niebuhr's relativism must not be nstrued as equivalent to denial that sus Christ is the ultimate revelation of od. He takes his position squarely ithin Christian history, and accepts sus as the meaning of all history. He ds revelation elsewhere than in Christ cause Christ is the light of all history. other words, Jesus is the meaning of story: an assertion which he makes as a enture of faith" and in virtue of his rticipation in Christian history.

The Christian faith that Christ is the revelation of God presents us with a task. God is the God of all history. To believe in the Deity of Christ requires that the Christian become a participator in all history. Instead of denying revelation in history other than the Christian, we are bound to find meaning in all history, to see all history in the light of Christ, as revealing God who is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." To believe in the Lordship of Jesus is to see in Him the unifying principle of all history; it is to participate in the one history of mankind; it is to believe that He is the revelation of God "the Creator of the ends of the earth." Thus the idea of revelation in Christianity is an inclusive idea as well as exclusive: exclusive in that without Jesus Christ, history has no unified meaning, and inclusive in that with Him all history is meaningful. Any reader who knows the difficulties attendant upon a discussion of the uniqueness and universality of Christianity will be grateful to Dr. Niebuhr for this clear and satisfying statement of the case.

The above discussion is a partial truth. With a fine sense for the realities of the case, Dr. Niebuhr maintains that the revelation of the meaning of history is also revolutionary. "The righteousness of God, which is revealed in Jesus Christ, is the eternal earnestness of a personal God" (p. 166). "Revelation of the person, then, is not revelation of the law, but of the law's sin and so a criticism of the law as well as its validation" (p. 170). "All thought about deity now undergoes a metamorphosis. Revelation is not a development of our religious ideas but their continuous conversion. God's self-disclosure is that permanent revolution in our religious life by which all religious truths are painfully transformed, and all religious behavior transfigured by re-

pentance and new faith" (p. 182). Any honest reading of the Gospels would verify fully this conception of revelation in Jesus Christ.

The readers of this journal will be very much interested in the following statement: "Revelation is the beginning of a revolution in our power thinking and our power politics" (p. 182). In spite of all efforts to circumvent the revolutionary import of Jesus for our conception of the really potent forces in history, we cannot escape the uneasy recognition that we do not believe "in the power of God . . . made manifest in the weakness of Jesus, in the meek and dying life which through death is raised to power" (p. 187). We are torn between faith in "the power of the world" and "the omnipotence of God" which operates through suffering and death. Revelation in Christ Jesus means that we repent continuously of our unbelief in God and believe in Him while we despair of ourselves. Thus it is that we sinful men believe in the goodness and power of God.

This is an unusually thoughtful and stimulating book. It is, theologically and philosophically, the most adequate discussion of revelation that recent Protestant thinking has produced. It is at once eminently Christian and rational. Perhaps Dr. Niebuhr reconciles reason and faith a bit too well and easily. The perennial tension between these two is hardly perceptible in this book. His dismissal of "supernaturalism" is too placid and thorough. He is right in protesting against the tendency of the old "orthodoxy" to substitute belief in the occurrence of miraculous events for faith in God," but he may not be so right in failing to insist that belief in "the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead" are inseparable from the Christian's faith in God. He is right in setting aside the view of the Scriptures as "the product of an inspiration which suspended the ordinary processes of human thought and guaranteed in inerrancy" (p. 75). But he fails to present a theory of inspiration which will also do justice to the historic conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. He is right in holding that revelation does not mean at all times a suspension of natural law. But he fails to make it clear that the Christian hope of eternal life is based on faith in God as against evidence from "nature," at least partly. To deny "miracle" and to affirm "revolution" exposes one to the danger of denying that the Christian faith is revolutionary with regard to the total existential human situation. A certain tension between reason and faith is essential to the Christian life. It is this tension which is largely dissipated in this book. However, these are things to think about and not obvious grounds for adverse criticism of so excellent a book.

JOSEPH HAROUTUNIAN.

Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago.

THE MIND OF THE SOUTH, *by W. J. Cash.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 429 pp., xi. Index. $3.75.

This book is indispensable for those who wish to know the South. Mr. Cash tells the story of the South's mores and beliefs in a fascinating manner. First of all he dispels the notion of an aristocratic heritage. The few Virginians—and they were homegrown aristocrats—who migrated into the cotton South did not impart a culture. Frontier customs prevailed well into the nineteenth century. With the expansion of cotton planting

d the growth of plantations, the planter ıss arose; but it was homespun and ere was a rapid turnover because of eculation in land and economic compeion in general. As Mr. Cash points t there were three "frontiers" in uthern history to perpetuate competi-n: the first, which coincided with the vention of the cotton gin; the second, er Reconstruction, caused by the adnt of the supply merchant; and the ird, which was produced by the rapid read of industrialization early in this ntury.

This accounts for two prevailing pects of Southern life: its individualn and the absence of social cleavage. hose who could, fought their way to e top; and while a "laissez-faire" psyology would tend to cut down class ling, it was perhaps more important t the frontier custom of personal relanship was preserved. Even up ough the industrialization during the ly part of this century the old custom evailed: most factory owners knew ir workers by their first names. This ling of personally belonging was reinced by the fact that blood relationship across class lines—and even across e lines, but that is another story. nnishness and sense of personal comnity with all Southerners was the re. Furthermore the yeoman counted the planter to be his leader and he ed the feudalistic ties. Perhaps most portant, the ever-present negro served a constant reminder of the necessity white solidarity in order to maintain premacy.

Mr. Cash traces other basic patterns. e romantic-hedonistic is one of the st interesting. Mr. Cash shows how itted in with the pattern of violence ich promoted frontier eye-gouging, ntlemanly dueling, and culminated in mob lynching. It was related beautifully with the love of oratory in politics and also with orgiastic revivalistic religion.

But, as always, there were also contradictory elements. The South's moralistic puritanism is set off in sharp contrast to this romantic-hedonistic strain. The worship of Southern womanhood ("gyneolatry" Mr. Cash calls it) is contrasted with miscegenation. The liking of persons as persons, which did indeed carry over into master-slave relations, is contrasted with the cruelty which slavery also bred. Mr. Cash says, "Virtually unlimited power acted inevitably to call up, in the coarser sort of master, that sadism which lies concealed in the depths of universal human nature—bred angry impatience and a taste for cruelty for its own sake, with a strength that neither kindliness (it continued to exist unimpaired side by side, and in the same man, with this other), nor notions of honor could effectively restrain."

As we all know, Reconstruction was no solution for the problem of race relations, and Mr. Cash points out its final great result was "that it established what I have called the savage ideal as it had not been established in any Western people since the decay of medieval feudalism, and almost as truly as it is established today in Fascist Italy, in Nazi Germany, in Soviet Russia—and so paralyzed Southern culture at its root."

The paralysis manifested itself in politics: "The ideals and loyalties of the apotheosized past [were] fused into the tightest coherence and endowed with all the binding emotional and intellectual power of any tribal complex of the Belgian Congo. Here was that mighty frame the Democratic Party, as potent an instrument of regimentation as any totemic society that ever existed." It also

manifested itself in religion: "Had it still been possible in the old South to be an open atheist or skeptic without suffering any physical penalty? Pious and patriotic drunks, riding home from a camp meeting or a party rally, were apt now to send bullets crashing through the unbeliever's windows. And sooner or later the Klan was almost certain to pause in its routine labors long enough to teach him reverence and a proper regard for the safety of his country with a horsewhip or a coat of tar."

Of course this intolerant obscurantism was not new in the post-bellum South. Sectarian pietism swept over the area in the early nineteenth century and when it was combined with the frantic effort to defend slavery against the arguments of the abolitionists, religious rigor mortis set in. The South believed itself not the *saving* remnant but the *saved* remnant in a lost world: Daniel's people of the saints of the Most High, Enoch's congregation of the Elect. The apocalyptic terms are most appropriate because the South thought in such terms; and the confusion was worse confounded by Biblical literalism which found a whole gospel in the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

Christianity in the South has continued to be other-worldly and self-righteous. Mr. Cash points out the relation of this to the social conditions: "Thus the preachers of the frenetic sects themselves officially ascribe their great success, next after the workings of the Holy Ghost, to the rising demand of the people for a place where they might worship without feeling ashamed of their clothes and manners, and a religion that would stress and give outlet to emotion. And all the evangelists insisted even more than the politicians on their own lowly origins, and discoursed continually on the theme of the superior virtue and piety of the poor as against the stiff-necked rich, and the certainty that in heaven it would be the former who would sit at the head of the table." Even the rotarian parsons of the new wealthy churches—those supported by the new textile and tobacco barons—insisted that earthly life is a mere bauble. "Just as warmly and constantly they held forth, too, on the superior virtue and piety of the poor, and the corollary that these would outtop the rich and worldly in paradise, though they carefully skirted any explicit identification of the latter with their own immediate overlords." So did, and unfortunately does, Christianity in the South continue to bring fiery coals to an already flaming New Castle—with, of course, some significant exceptions, as readers of this magazine are aware.

I have not indicated Mr. Cash's analysis of the conditions which prevail now in the Nation's Number One Problem. But most people are more aware of present conditions than they are of the South's history and only by understanding the past can the present be fully grasped. Mr. Cash's treatment of this past is excellent and fascinating. He deals aptly with economic forces, social movements, political balances of power and political intrigue. And he goes beneath the surface. He sees at the heart of the South "a great plexus of fears and hates." He speaks of "the inheritance which, labelled the Natural Depravity of Man and Original Sin, had immemorially haunted their fears: breaking the bonds so painfully and so slowly and so imperfectly imposed upon it, and shambling forth with little red eyes, free and proud."

This book is a balanced and profound treatment by a man who knows and loves

ıe South and who is able to resist the landishments of its romance without ıissing its genuine achievements and its romise. Unfortunately the book is not ocumented as a scholar might wish; but ıere is the mark of authenticity on very page.

RICHARD W. DAY.

OSITIVE DEMOCRACY, *by James Feibleman.* University of North Carolina Press, 1940. Pp. xv, 256. $2.50.

This is a collection of essays originally ublished in various scholarly journals. is held together chiefly by the convicon that the current woes of democracy ring from its negative character which turn Mr. Feibleman traces to what he signates as "nominalism." He would place this with "positive democracy." he program of "positive democracy" n best be summed up by giving the thor's own statement of his general nclusions.

"First: Democracy ought to recognize the ality of society as an entity which is comsed of real individuals and their goods t which is more than a mere aggregate such individuals.

"Second: Democracy ought to be ruled a majority which in turn acknowledges e higher authority of reason. Thus it ght to be a positive, rational doctrine ther than a negative, irrational affair.

"Third: Democracy ought to promote e welfare of science as essential to its own lf-preservation. But it ought to go no rther with its own regulations and strictions than experience will allow reaı to go.

"Fourth: Democracy ought to found itself ot upon the preservation of property ghts but rather upon the recognition of e necessity for the right relation between operties and citizens. In this new property sense, it cannot tolerate any important division of its citizens along class lines.

"Fifth: Democracy ought to be liberal in allowing freedom of expression and a certain measure of freedom of social action, as a consequence of the recognition of the civil rights of the minority under majority-rule. But it ought to secure to all citizens the right to work as well as the right to speak.

"Sixth: Democracy ought to have as an end the furtherance of the welfare of individuals as well as of the whole of society. But the motive of the democratic citizen ought to be the furtherance of the welfare of society as well as of individuals" (pp. x-xi).

The emphasis on reason in the second and third of the above conclusions is characteristic of the entire book which attempts to establish reason as an authoritarian foundation for "positive democracy." Although he does not offer us any carefully developed analysis of his conception of reason, Mr. Feibleman does furnish some revealing clues as, for example, in his discussion of a rational social liberalism. "When all the sciences," he declares, "reach the same degree of success that has been obtained in physics, the ultimate rule of reason over belief will become apparent, and there will no longer be any claim made for complete freedom of opinion. Once the social sciences are in a position to state some of the laws of social conduct, the reason for actions will be apparent, and the conflict of actions arising from conflict of individual opinion will be greatly diminished. Thus the ideal of society (approachable, albeit remote) involves the complete abolition of freedom of thought and its replacement by adequate reason for thought. Inasmuch, however, as such a state of affairs is incredibly remote, a residual rational lib-

eralism is essential to any progress toward it" (pp. 160-1).

It is difficult to see how Mr. Feibleman's confidence in scientific method, rational laws, and the ethics of Charles S. Peirce (to which he devotes a brief chapter) has any immediate relevance to the factors which determine the situation that democracy in this country faces now or in the near future. In fact, the entire book carries an air of detachment which seems to suggest that the problems of democracy are to be solved by the construction of an a priori logical system of concepts. No serious effort is made to grapple with the social, economic, and psychological forces which condition the milieu within which any form of democracy must operate. On the historical side Mr. Feibleman's discussion of democracy and nominalism is a very slight effort and leaves much to be desired. One would not suspect from it that religious influences ever played any role in the development of democratic ideas and practises either in England or in this country.

Readers of this journal will be interested to learn how a rational liberal deals with the problem of coercion. As one might expect, it comes in for relatively little attention. In passing, however, Mr. Feibleman does state that "coercion is a product either of the non-acceptance of the principles of government or of the corruption of men in office. The true nature of government is regulative" (p. 48).

Since his purpose of discovering the saving elements of democracy that they might be made available "whenever and wherever democracy is to be applied again in practise" was somewhat more ambitious than that of the usual "tract for the times," one wonders why Mr. Feibleman did not postpone the publication of these essays until he had had time to brood more deeply over the meaning, history, and prospects of democracy.

GEORGE L. ABERNETHY.

CAN WE KEEP THE FAITH? *by James Bissett Pratt.* Yale University Press, New Haven. 1941. 218 pp. $2.75.

Professor Pratt's latest book is a philosophical defense of liberal Protestantism. The "faith" which he is concerned to keep is one which views Christianity as a great movement of spiritual growth in the life of the race. He is convinced that (what he calls) the New Supernaturalism tends to prevent Christianity from changing and adapting in the light of new circumstances. Hence he is anxious to outline a type of Christian conviction which can retain its vitality and be transmitted to future generations, despite the perils of the present situation, without being driven to what he regards as a dangerous and intellectually disreputable form of dogmatism.

He mentions only two possible ways of defining Christianity. The first is his own purely historical definition, which denotes a characteristic form of religious experience, ethical activity and belief. The second is some form of creedal definition, stress upon which always fails to do justice to the richness and variety of the Christian tradition. His statement of the problem overlooks the fact that if the spiritual movement within human life and experience which is called the Christian community has its ultimate ground and origin in the activity of God, then his own definition is inadequate. Indeed, severe limitations must always be placed upon the usefulness of a description of Christianity as an historical

enomenon, which—like Professor att's—will not be affected by the truth falsity of Christian convictions. More- er, he does not adequately distinguish tween dogmas or creeds and the self- sclosure of God to which they seek to int. Thus he fails to see that revela- n can remain the central concern of ristian faith and theology, while this ncern requires reformulation and fresh cision in every age and in every life.

Many of Professor Pratt's criticisms the New Supernaturalists possess a lue which is quite detachable from the egoing considerations. For example, shows how Brunner fails to recognize t all communion with God must be diated by "ideas," and he calls atten- n to Brunner's ambiguity on the ques- n as to whether faith is received by us a wholly passive manner or as involv- "decision" in some meaningful sense. does not quite see, however, that cision" may be genuinely "mine" and he same time have reference to some- ng which has been done "for me" d not "by me" in any sense).

There is one point in particular at ich Professor Pratt might well have en more sympathetic attention to at Brunner is saying. In Chapters V VI the author sets appeal to revela- n or authority in stark opposition to son as the ultimate court of appeal. describes the latter as "an authority ding in the very nature of humanity" 72). This fails to take into account fact that the content of faith may be patible with "reason and evidence" hout being supplied by them. For mple, it may be contended that belief divine forgiveness can be rationally ressed, while no amount of reasoning constitute or bring about such for- eness. Professor Pratt himself points (p. 84) how the "venture of faith," whether it be naturalistic, liberal or Barthian, goes beyond reason and evidence; but he writes as though faith were merely a matter of human volition. The basic error throughout his discussion is the assumption that "reason" (apart from its purely formal employment) is a neutral capacity. Presumably if someone were to bring forward interpretations of naturalism, liberalism and faith in revelation, all of which were equally compatible with such knowledge and evidence as is available, but all of which went beyond these factors in divergent directions, Professor Pratt would have to choose between them by whim or chance. Actually, however, each position has its own view of "reason," and there is no neutral principle which can be appealed to in settling the dispute. All of them, insofar as they are expressed intelligibly, must abide by formal conditions affecting structure, communicability and internal consistency. But the questions—or, rather, the answers—which are decisive for theology lie outside what these positions might have in common. Specifically, when he dismisses Brunner's claim that only a transformed or converted reason can ultimately be compatible with Christian faith, Professor Pratt is not resting his case upon a universally axiomatic principle; he is resting it upon the assumption that the *imago Dei* has not been so impaired as to make a positive relationship and continuity between God and natural reason impossible. It is helpful to have a conflict between presuppositions clearly exhibited; but it is misleading to assume that one has thereby decisively refuted his opponent.

The remainder of the book follows a pattern which can easily be anticipated from what has just been said. The author defends the doctrine that God is

immanent as well as transcendent; he rejects the notion that man can be inevitably sinful and yet responsible; (in this connection he somewhat naïvely accuses Brunner of using words in a sense different from ordinary English when he differentiates between "sin" and "moral evil"); he puts forward a restrained but favorable estimate of mysticism; he seeks to safeguard the feasibility of the moral ideal of Christianity; he stresses the importance of belief in "immortality"; and he points out the advantages of the liberal attitude toward other religions.

The volume as a whole is one of the most persuasive restatements of liberalism which has been published in recent years. Besides containing an incisive running attack against the New Supernaturalism, it occasionally deals a few well-directed blows at dogmatic naturalism and humanism. Unfortunately the author pays but slight attention to questions of soteriology and to the eschatological aspect of the Gospel, where some of the controversial points between liberalism and the Theology of Crisis come to a head. He also succumbs, at times, to the temptation of turning Biblical statements which in their context refer to the converted man into statements about human nature in general. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to name a book which presents the main issues of contemporary theology in a more readable, more honest and more stimulating fashion.

DAVID E. ROBERTS.

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